

Ada Boshell Celebrating Sixtieth Year on Stage



ADA BOSHELL

Grand Young Old Lady of the Theater Still Going Gayly Along in 'The Music Box Revue.'

Here is a grand young old lady of the stage. She is Ada Boshell of the "Music Box Revue" company, and next Wednesday she will have been on the stage sixty years. Still active and vigorous, Miss Boshell has played all seasons in the Irving Berlin Revue and will go on tour with it when this performance is replaced by another at the Sam H. Harris and Irving Berlin Music Box. Following the matinee of this six score and ten anniversary the members of the company will celebrate the event with interesting exercises. Augustus Thomas, Daniel Frohman, F. F. Mackay, with Sam H. Harris, Irving Berlin and Hassard Short, the stage director of the Music Box Revue, will all be present. Mr. Harris has also asked all the stars and members of the company playing and rehearsing in New York to be present and do honor to this veteran of the footlights, who, after sixty years of active playing, finds herself in an organization noted for its youth and beauty throughout the country. The sixty years, however, are no handicap to Miss Boshell, for she is as much a girl as any of them.

Ada Boshell was born in Liverpool in 1862. She came to this country during the civil war. One of her first engagements was in "Paddy Miles' Boy," an old time farce, which opened at Tweedie Hall, Albany. Douglas Fairbanks' mother and aunt were members of the company. As these juvenile Zouaves made their first appearance just about the time the Ellsworth Zouaves became famous in the civil war, they once attracted a great deal of attention. After appearing in other children companies, in pantomime and specialties, Miss Boshell went to Cuba, where the next Wednesday she will have been on the stage sixty years. Still active and vigorous, Miss Boshell has played all seasons in the Irving Berlin Revue and will go on tour with it when this performance is replaced by another at the Sam H. Harris and Irving Berlin Music Box. Following the matinee of this six score and ten anniversary the members of the company will celebrate the event with interesting exercises. Augustus Thomas, Daniel Frohman, F. F. Mackay, with Sam H. Harris, Irving Berlin and Hassard Short, the stage director of the Music Box Revue, will all be present. Mr. Harris has also asked all the stars and members of the company playing and rehearsing in New York to be present and do honor to this veteran of the footlights, who, after sixty years of active playing, finds herself in an organization noted for its youth and beauty throughout the country. The sixty years, however, are no handicap to Miss Boshell, for she is as much a girl as any of them.

As evidence of Miss Boshell's activity, in "Snowbirds" she was shot up on the stage through a trap with all the agility of an acrobat. In the Music Box Revue she plays with grace and fine effect the part of "Old Age" in the "Fountain of Youth" scene.

"This engagement that I am now finishing under Mr. Harris and Mr. Berlin's management," she says, "is one of the happiest of a long career, in which I have played hundreds of parts."

Extortion Charges at Oberammergau Vigorously Denied

Col. A. S. Frost, U. S. A., Refutes Swindling Charges in Passion Play.

Special Dispatch to THE NEW YORK HERALD. MEMPHIS, Tenn., Sept. 2.—Denouncing as untrue the charge that the peasant folk of Oberammergau had capitalized the Passion Play and that the people were enriching themselves at the expense of tourists, Col. A. S. Frost, U. S. Army, told a representative of THE NEW YORK HERALD that cable advice from Munich, which he inferred carried inference that Anton Lang, de-

lineator of the Christ, was guilty of profiteering, were absolutely without foundation. Col. Frost spent four days at Anton Lang's pension. Mrs. Frost was with him. Their expense for the four days was less than \$10, American money. Col. Frost was shown many favors by Mr. Lang, who obtained tickets to the great religious spectacle for the Colonel and his wife. The tickets cost less than \$1.

"Extortion at Oberammergau and swindling by Anton Lang! It is unbelievable," the Colonel said forcibly. "I heard that sort of thing before going to the Passion Play and didn't want to go. I had made no reservations, and it was not until the Wednesday preceding the play I attended that, yielding to my wife's wishes, I went to the Stuttgart travel bureau and tried to engage seats."

"The police clerk regretfully informed me that all the seats were sold for over

a month ahead and there would be no use in going to the next performance. That evening my wife was so disappointed that I wrote a personal letter to Anton Lang telling him that we were Americans in the sixties, and unless we attended the Passion Play at the next performance would probably never have another opportunity. I ended the letter with this request: 'Will you do what you can for us?' I mailed the letter early Thursday morning and expected nothing from it, but Friday noon I received this telegram: 'I have provided for you, Anton Lang.'"

"The next performance was to be on Monday and we reached Oberammergau at midnight Sunday. The porter, a 16-year-old youth with long hair, carried three heavy suit cases half a mile to the Lang pension, where we found Mrs. Lang awaiting us. She gave me an envelope containing the two tickets and had the porter take our baggage to a room, where I cheerfully paid him the fee of 30 marks, which meant ten cents to me, returned his "Grass Gott" and turned my attention to the room, which was very comfortable.

"After the first part of the perform-

ance, 8 A. M. to 12 M., I went to the police station to pay the Bavarian tax of 200 marks each for myself and wife, all together, at the present rate of exchange, about \$150. To cut the matter short, here is a translation of my bill:

"Pension Anton Lang, Villa Dehmel, Oberammergau. Account Mr. Frost. Pension at 200 marks a day for four days..... 2,000
Dwelling tax..... 300
Admission (separate)..... 200
Service (separate)..... 200
Total..... 2,700
"Payment thankfully received.
"ANTON LANG."

"At that time 300 marks could be bought for a dollar. The tickets for two cost less than a dollar for an eight hour performance.
"The dwelling tax was about \$1.20. The police tax, which does not appear on the bill, was about \$1.30. The entire Lang bill for myself and wife cost me about \$9.50 for four days board, tickets to the show, the telegram sent in reply to my letter and the dwelling tax, which Mr. Lang had to turn over to the police.
"Far from feeling robbed, I felt like

a robber, with the consciousness that a mark meant far more to these people than it did to me.
"As to the performance, I never saw greater reverence shown anywhere in all my life.
"Of course, on the main streets there were many changes, like Cook's Tourist Agency, the American Express Company correspondents and several branches of German banks. These were there for profit, yes, but also for the accommodation of the tourists. Speaking for myself, I was very glad to avail myself of the services of the correspondents of the American Express Company, and to this day I believe that I have received full value for my money."

"I don't think any of the native Oberammergauers are making excessive profit. Seats have to be booked through various European agencies, like Cook's and the American Express. The tickets were 3 marks each, with a booking charge of 20 marks each. Evidently Anton Lang had to get our tickets from a previous buyer, perhaps of a speculator. If so, I was charged only 30 marks, or 10 cents, more apiece than they cost him. I don't mind to him for his moderation. I would have paid ten times as much very joyfully."

Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club Holds Annual Ball
Special Dispatch to THE NEW YORK HERALD. BEACH HAVEN, N. J., Sept. 2.—The annual ball of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club was held in the Hotel Baldwin here last evening. The costumes, the decorations and the music made the evening very memorable. Many week enders are registered at the hotel until after Labor Day.
Surf fishermen, including many women who have taken up the sport, are arriving for September and October. Fishing is at its best. Several boats will remain open to cater to them and the gunners. Ships are reported as plentiful. The season opened fifteen days ago.
At the Hotel Baldwin from Philadelphia are Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Andler and Miss Elaine Turner; from New York Mr. and Mrs. William Jones, Jr. and Mrs. R. H. Scoble and Miss R. O. Henderson and from Newark Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Greer, Mr. and Mrs. Walter White and Miss Edith Downes.

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Your Inspection Is Invited Now.

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The location of the San Remo—facing Central Park at 74th to 75th Streets, and the personal, cheerful character of its service, add to its home appeal.

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Giacomo Puccini's 'Manon' Is Baptized in Good Wine

Composer, Too Timid to Make Speech at Premiere of Opera, Triels at a Banquet—Glasses Fall Before Expressive Gestures.

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD. New York Herald Bureau, Home, Aug. 19.

Giacomo Puccini, who has broken the traditions of the struggling composer by building a healthy fortune on the site of his work, did not always possess the self-confidence which now makes him a successful man in the world of affairs. In fact, the brilliant premiere of his first important opera, "Manon Lescaut," was ruined for him because he had to make a speech.

Puccini wrote "Manon" in 1892 on the novel by Abbe Prevost. Massenet was already considering the theme, but Puccini did not lose his enthusiasm for it on that account. He never signed the libretto with the author's name, however. The Italian "Manon" had too many fathers to be acknowledged by any one of them. Marco Praga began the work, Domenico Oliva continued it and Puccini himself altered some of the verses. Giulio Ricordi verified part of the play and Luigi Illica put on some of the finishing touches.

"Manon" also had no fixed birthplace. Puccini composed bits in Milan, Lucca, Torre del Lago, Switzerland, writing the acts out of their order according to climate and mood.

Avoided Speech at Premier.

The premiere took place in Turin in February, 1893, with Princess Letitia in the royal box. Puccini was called out a score of times, grasping the hand of the tenor, Cremonini, and the barytone, Moro, who was loudly weeping from emotion. But he did not make a speech. The aristocracy of Turin, who wished to express their gratification at his success, a week later invited him to a gala banquet. Puccini, on his way from Milan to Turin, was suddenly struck cold by the thought that he would have to make a speech of thanks. Hastily he wrote a brief but moving address on a slip of paper, and had it partly memorized by the time he arrived.

With the precious scrap of paper in his left coat pocket, he sat down among the north Italian nobles and listened to their speeches, given in indescribable elegance and grace by the excellent wine the speakers had enjoyed. Puccini was described as the rising star of musical Italy, the prince of sounds, a Columbus who would discover new and spacious continents of melody.

His speech had vanished from his mind. He scrambled to his feet, and after a long, expectant pause, stuttered out, "Thanks everybody." He then made a despairing and all inclusive gesture, sweeping all the glasses off the end of the table. "Manon" was baptized in red and white wine.

"Amico Fritz," the opera of Pietro Mascagni, which is having a short summer run at the Quirino Theater here, has a curious history. "Fritz" is one of the less known Mascagni works, perhaps because it was the victim of a sort of psychological sabotage on the part of the composer.

In 1891 Mascagni, with his associates, was on his way to his studio in Serenola after a brilliant run of his first opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana," in Naples. Emma Calvé, Fernando de Lucia and other famous singers had contributed to make the opera one of the greatest musical successes of the period. Mascagni's friends urged him to follow up this victory by immediately composing a new opera.

While they were discussing the difficulty of finding a libretto with the power of "Cavalleria," Mascagni, in a burst of frankness, said: "To tell you the truth, I've been a bit elated by the attention paid the story of 'Cavalleria' by the press. I think it detracts from the music. I'd like a story that's just nothing at all but a framework for my music. Then the opera will be judged for its music, and its music only."

His publisher, Edoardo Sonzogno, pulled a little French play by Eckmann-Chatillon out of his portfolio. "Here's what you want then," he said. Mascagni immediately read the play, and before the train reached its destination had made arrangements for its verification. Together with a young librettist, Nicolo Daspuro, he worked on the opera in a bare room in Serenola only large enough to hold his piano and a rough table.

"Fritz" was rapidly completed and produced. The fall at the Costanzi Opera House with a brilliant company of stars. The frail little libretto had proved strong enough to drap his melodies around, and Mascagni was called before the curtain thirty-four times. He had his wish. There was nothing to talk about in the opera except his music.

LONDON, Sept. 2.—A committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Sir Paul Vinogradoff has been formed to help the professional classes in Russia, whose condition has been described as most pitiable.

Since the Soviets adopted their new economic policy, thousands of professional men and women who have been in the employ of the Government at a salary of half a pound of bread a day have lost even this pittance, and are now face to face with starvation.